

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 had many consequences. Among them was the gobbling up of broadcast Radio and Television stations by a few media conglomerates. As a result broadcast decisions for these stations are now made by people who do not live and will never live in the areas for which they make the decisions.

The very nature of broadcast radio is that it is perfectly suited by its broadcast signal to serve the area in which it is located. Media consolidation serves to minimize or eliminate this positive aspect of the medium. Even if conglomerates were conscientious about serving individual communities (which they most certainly are NOT,) It would still be very difficult for those conglomerates in their top down management models to make decisions which will benefit the communities which generate their wealth.

More important than the nature of management structure and radio signal though, is the attitude of the companies involved. In discussing the possibility of a radio station serving the community in any way one gets responses that are supercilious and arrogant. To suggest such service should be done makes management treat you like you are someone who just doesn't get it. It is as if they are saying: "Obviously, we are not being regulated now, the airwaves are ours for free, and we get to make all the money we can without any responsibility to benefit the communities which are filling our pockets."

Since localism is important and media conglomeration is inimical to that end, something must be done to make more radio stations available to local ownership and provide real competition with the media moguls. That might even force them to reconsider their arrogance about public service. The conglomerates will not like this, but it is a natural consequence of what they have done. There are no rewards. There are no punishments. There are only consequences.